

Maurice Hinchey NEWS

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KERHONKSON AND KINGSTON FIRE DEPARTMENTS AWARDED FEMA GRANTS

HINCHEY FOUGHT FOR CONTINUATION OF GRANT PROGRAM

KINGSTON - U.S. Representative Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) today announced that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has awarded grants of \$60,100 to the Kerhonkson Fire Department and \$54,000 to the Kingston Fire Department under the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program for Fire Prevention Programs. This is the tenth round of grants through this program that Hinchey has strongly supported.

"We have all come to appreciate firefighters much more because of the extraordinary circumstances of the past two weeks," said Hinchey. "But it's also important to understand the challenges they face on a daily basis. Fire prevention programs save lives and cut down on the frequency with which firefighters are placed in harm's way."

The Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program was created by the 106th Congress and authorized for \$400 million over two years. Congress appropriated \$100 million for the grants that are now being awarded. Fire companies had the opportunity to apply for assistance in any of six categories: training, wellness/fitness, vehicles, firefighting equipment, personal protective equipment, and fire prevention programs.

Initially the Bush Administration's fiscal year 2002 budget request did not include any funding for the program. Hinchey and several of his colleagues wrote to the president on March 5, urging him to reconsider that decision and to request the remaining \$300 million that had been authorized. The administration subsequently restored \$100 million to the budget.

"I commend the president for agreeing to continue funding for this important new source of grants," Hinchey added. "Now that the funds for the program's first year are beginning to flow to the local fire departments, it should be easier to demonstrate that this is an effective use of federal dollars. That will help us keep the program going for future years."